“Crossing Borders Against Trafficking in Women”
Final Report
98/057/W
Title of project
“Crossing Borders Against Trafficking in Women”

Short project description
The Commission maintains a working description of your project based on your original application and will insert this for purposes of consistency.

Year funded
A follow-up to this project was accepted for DAPHNE funding in 1999.

Organisation and address/tel/fax/web site
Stiftelsen Kvinnoforum/Foundation of Women’s Forum
Kungsgatan 65
111 22 Stockholm
Sweden
Tel: +46 8 56 22 88 00
Fax: +46 8 56 22 88 50
Kvinnoforum web site: http://www.kvinnoforum.se
Project web site: http://www.qweb.kvinnoforum.se/trafficking/

Contact person
Nina Strandberg, Project Manager
E-mail: nina.strandberg@kvinnoforum.se

Materials available
- Web site resource base (http://www.qweb.kvinnoforum.se/trafficking/ ), where contact information and activities of the NGOs, GOs, research institutions and individuals in the network are listed along with references, on-line articles, discussion forums, other resources and links to other web sites.
- Strandberg, Nina, Kvinnoforum. “Mellan tvång och fri vilja” om det internationella arbetet mot prostitution, (Between Force and Free Will – About the International Work Against Prostitution and Trafficking), article in the Swedish magazine Bang, October 1999.
Project partners

Latvian Gender Problem Centre, Riga, Latvia
MONIKA, Multicultural Women’s Association, Helsinki, Finland.
**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Introduction**

Trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a growing problem in the Nordic and Baltic countries. According to the International Organisation for Migration, an estimated 500,000 women are trafficked each year into Western Europe. Unofficial records estimate that hundreds of thousands of Baltic and Russian women leave their countries annually in search of temporary work, with plans to return. Many of these women end up in situations where their fundamental human rights are violated.

Trafficking in women is a severe violation of women’s human rights and a threat to the women’s mental and physical health. Since its inception, Kvinnoforum has addressed the issue of trafficking in women and girls in its international work. Kvinnoforum noticed and was alarmed by the increase of trafficking in women in the early 1990s with a growing number of trafficked women from Eastern and Central Europe. While the work and research of NGOs against trafficking in Asia, Latin America and Europe has advanced, Kvinnoforum realised that such work had barely occurred in the Nordic and Baltic countries. Nonetheless, Nordic NGOs and social workers had seen a considerable increase in the number of women trafficked from the Baltic countries to the Nordic countries.

Hence, in 1998 Kvinnoforum conducted an inventory survey in the Baltic and Nordic countries, Russia and Belarus to discern which NGOs, GOs and research institutions were working with rehabilitation or prevention of trafficking in women. In order to locate resources that could be mobilised in this work, organisations working or doing research on prostitution were included. The result of the survey was disturbing as very few organisations worked against trafficking. There was, however, great interest among NGOs to learn more about trafficking in women and to incorporate trafficking into their usual activities on such issues as adolescent education, HIV/Aids prevention and so on. The survey also found a great demand for co-operation among NGOs, GOs and institutions in the countries around the Baltic Sea, both those already working against trafficking and those interested in starting this work. Similarly, communication with NGOs in Western Europe, indicated a need for European networking and exchange of experiences and knowledge. In addition, Kvinnoforum found that the existing resources on trafficking, such as literature, films, web sites and information on organisations, were not easily accessible.

**Aims of the Project**

As trafficking is an international problem with severe implications on the lives, freedoms, rights and health of the women and girls, international and intersectional co-operation and interdisciplinary and innovative responses are imperative.

Therefore, Kvinnoforum formulated the project “Crossing Borders Against Trafficking in Women and Girls” (hereafter referred to as the project), funded by the European Commissions DAPHNE initiative and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The
The overall aim of the project was to counter trafficking by addressing the needs identified through the findings of the initial survey. Towards this end, the project worked to facilitate co-operation among actors in different sectors of society of the Nordic and Baltic countries, through the creation of a contact network. The project also sought to achieve capacity building of organisations in the region and to put trafficking on the political agenda. In doing so, the project would discuss the problem of trafficking from a gender perspective, that is, in relation to women’s position in society in general e.g. living conditions, political influence, situation in the workplace, the gendered labour market, etc. The project would disseminate information to the actors in the region and gather information on how the different actors perceived the situation, what specific problems they encountered and what their needs were. The project would discuss methods of prevention and rehabilitation and, by sharing experiences and knowledge, develop good practice models. The gathered information would be published in a resource book and on the Internet, thereby ensuring accessibility to actors globally. The practical aims of the project were the following:

- To establish a concrete network of Nordic and Baltic NGOs, researchers and other contact persons, working with the issue of trafficking in women or interested in doing so. To facilitate intersectional co-operation and discussion with government institutions and the judiciary.
- To gather and disseminate information, to promote advocacy and awareness-raising in the Nordic and Baltic states where the growing problem of trafficking has just begun to be discussed. To build capacities of NGOs through information and discussions.
- To establish a resource database with a European focus, on contact persons, professionals, scientific studies, research institutions, NGOs, governmental institutions, information on trafficking, statistics, legislative measures, articles, upcoming conferences and workshops, etc.

Methodology/activities

The project approach

The project aimed to achieve its goals by combining the effectiveness of information technology with the quality of personal meetings. An expert group, travelled in the Baltic and Nordic countries where they assisted in capacity building, facilitating new contacts and building a network of NGOs and other actors. In this work, the expert group drew on the experiences and knowledge of European NGOs and interacted with a European IT-based network. The project was driven from a NGO perspective where capacity building of NGOs was most important. Although government organisations and media were included in the process, the project remained NGO-driven to ensure dynamic processes, independence and efficiency.

Key considerations of the project were gender, diversity, human rights, and co-operation. Hence trafficking was discussed from a human rights and gender perspective, diversity was built into the project by using a multi-national expert group and
formulating the content in accordance with the context, and co-operation was both a means and end of the expert group and the network.

**Partnership**

Kvinnoforum worked in partnership with the Latvian Gender Problem Centre and MONIKA, Multicultural Women’s Association in Finland. While Kvinnoforum formulated the project framework, all three organisations decided upon the content. The three organisations together discussed and planned the outline of the meetings, travelling programmes, the programme of the training week, and the work ahead. The expert group was composed of one person from each of the organisations. Each group member had good knowledge of the different issues regarding trafficking in women as well as deep insight into their local context and a wide network of contacts. MONIKA’s expert was Ms Natalia Ollus, Vice President, who is a Social Anthropologist with expertise in the area of violence against women, specifically violence against immigrant women, and UN work with crime prevention. The Latvian expert was Dr Tatjana Kurova, Director, who is a Medical Doctor with expertise in HIV/AIDS and STD prevention among women in prostitution in Latvia, and in work against trafficking in women. Kvinnoforum’s expert and project co-ordinator was Ms Nina Strandberg, a Political Scientist with specific expertise in women’s health and empowerment, and IT-facilitated networking.

The expert group worked on the project for three months. Before beginning this work the expert group received a one-week training on issues of trafficking. Among the issues highlighted were gender equality, networking, strategies, working in multicultural environments, social work and prostitution. The training was both theoretical and practical.

The experts were responsible for maintaining contact with media and organisations in their respective countries. They were also responsible for the programme of the expert group in their own and one other country. Drawing on their own experience, knowledge of the context, and national networks, each expert planned the number and form of meetings and with which organisations and institutions to meet. The other persons in the expert group assisted with ideas and other contacts. This method of organising the programme ensured the accuracy of the programme.

**Meetings with Nordic and Baltic Organisations**

The expert group spent about four days in each Nordic and Baltic country meeting with NGOs, government institutions, research institutions, media and politicians. Meetings were held in order to disseminate and gather information on the problem of trafficking, possible solutions, methods of prevention and rehabilitation, needs and ideas of the organisations. The primary role of the expert group was not to lobby, educate the public or implement methods, but rather to facilitate and build capacities for NGOs to proceed in the work against trafficking. Information gathered and produced during meetings of the expert group and NGOs was continuously fed into a resource database and disseminated to the network. Because Kvinnoforum had overestimated the knowledge of organisations in the Baltic countries the discussions had to focus more on the concept
and phenomena of trafficking, and less on best practice models of prevention and rehabilitation.

At the meetings the organisations and institutions were invited to join the network. Although some organisation felt trafficking was outside their scope of activities or capabilities, most organisations were eager to join the network. The expert group also used the method of utilising existing arenas for disseminating information about trafficking and about the project, and held lectures and workshops in several conferences (see annexed list quantitative results for a list of conferences). Altogether, the project met with or had contact with 114 NGOs, GOs and research institutions, 88 of whom became members of the network during the project period.

The Network and Interaction
The creation of the contact network continued throughout the project. The project used a method for networking already in use by Q Web, which is a global contact network on women’s health and empowerment issues, and an activity of Kvinnoforum. Using the existing structure of Q Web created added value, including sustainability of the network, a wider reach of the project information and greater possibilities of addressing trafficking with different approaches. During the meetings with the organisations, questions that arose were easily addressed through resources in the expert’s different networks, such as Q Web.

Resource book and database
The information collected and produced during the expert group’s travel, and by the co-ordinator throughout the project, constituted the resource database available on the project’s web site. The content of the database is focussed on Europe in terms of organisations and literature, but is open for global interaction and did at the end of the project contain organisations, literature and other information from other parts of the world. The network contributes to the resource database with statistics, articles, organisational information, contact addresses etc. The web site has had 2600 visitor since the counter was installed on February 24th, 1999. (See annex for detailed information about the content of the web site.)

As the organisations’ knowledge of trafficking was very limited, Kvinnoforum and its partners decided to make the resource book educational and practical. The contact information and description of activities of 80 NGOs, GOs and institutions included in the network are published in the resource book together with articles on what trafficking is, different approaches to trafficking, different views on prostitution, what can be done against trafficking, what is the situation of victims and practical advice for women and girls who want to work abroad.

Evaluation
Kvinnoforum used both qualitative and quantitative indicators for evaluating the project. Among the quantitative indicators are number of organisations met, number of articles in the press and number of visitors to the web site. (Please see annex for quantitative
indicators and results.) To ensure flexibility of the project, a method of continuous evaluation was used. After each meeting with organisations and institutions, the expert group evaluated the meeting in terms of outcome, method and content of communication, response of the organisations/institutions to our message, and ways to improve meeting procedures. When the programme in a country was concluded, the expert group evaluated the programme in terms of type, number and geographical location of organisations met, and what could be learned when drawing up the programme for the other countries.

Conclusions/recommendations

The outcome of the project has been above expectations. The number of organisations interested in participating in the network was far greater than expected. The project was successful also in reaching a broad audience and conveying its message to a large variety of media, decision-makers and actors. At the end of the project, the region now has a solid structure to build continuing work upon.

The multinational expert group was a success. The different experiences, networks and knowledge of the three participants in the expert group provided the project with added value. The group’s diversity ensured that trafficking was addressed from different angles, that very different organisations were met with, and that requests from organisations could be followed up and in some instances forwarded to other persons or organisations.

The global NGO movement against trafficking is divided into two fractions differing in their views on prostitution. These fractions are largely represented by the two global coalitions against trafficking, with little or no co-operation in between. Kvinnoforum has managed to co-operate with both fractions and put effort into nuancing the different perspectives. The project provided a valuable bridge between the fractions, and pointed to issues where it is possible and necessary to co-operate.

The sustainability of the resource base and network is ensured through its incorporation in Q Web, which is a global resource base and contact network on wider women’s health and empowerment issues, and an ongoing activity of Kvinnoforum. The resource base and the network will therefore continue to be available and maintained on the Internet and have global reach. Incorporating the trafficking network into Q Web also meant that more organisations found that there was plenty to gain from joining the network.

Recommendations for further actions by NGOs and GOs to counter trafficking in women:

- Training on how to work with prevention of and advocacy against trafficking and rehabilitation of victims (will be carried out by next DAPHNE project).
• Developing closer contact and exchange with the other European actors (will be carried out by next DAPHNE project)
• Establishing victim rehabilitation centres.
• Training development assistance personnel and other foreign staff in the Baltic States
• Encouraging government and EU pressure on applicant states to take the issue of trafficking seriously and provide funding for local NGOs.

Lessons/evaluation
A few lessons from the project:
• The great interest in the issue of trafficking that was expressed in Kvinnoforum’s initial survey had led Kvinnoforum to assume that knowledge on the issue of trafficking was greater than it turned out to be. This meant that the meetings with the expert group and the organisations came to be about the concept of trafficking and very little about practical methods of working. This in turn had two effects. First, very little in the way of best practice models could be gathered and second, the planned electronic discussion forums for sharing methods of preventive and rehabilitative work could not be carried out. The electronic interaction was therefore limited in favour of face-to-face interaction with NGOs and others in Nordic and Baltic countries.

• Kvinnoforum found that NGOs and other actors in the Baltic countries, for historical reasons, were more interested in the issue of trafficking when addressed as a human rights issue rather than an issue of gender inequality. A good strategy is therefore to stress the human rights aspect of trafficking in public discourse and include gender equality in any training programme.

• The multicultural expert group with diverse expertise provided added value in several ways. For example the group’s composition visibly inspired the organisations by providing an example of fruitful co-operation.

• A good method of facilitating co-operation is to invite one NGO and one GO, or two other organisations that have not previously co-operated, to the same meeting. The expert group here worked as a catalyst.